

**To:** Poy, Thomas[poy.thomas@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Deltoral, Miguel[deltoral.miguel@epa.gov]; Klassman, Debra[klassman.debra@epa.gov]; Peaceman, Karen[Peaceman.Karen@epa.gov]; Nelson, Leverett[nelson.leverett@epa.gov]; Bair, Rita[bair.rita@epa.gov]; Porter, Andrea[porters.andrea@epa.gov]  
**From:** Fulghum, Mary  
**Sent:** Mon 4/3/2017 1:42:39 PM  
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FYI

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## EPA Will Respond to East Chicago Lead Crisis: Regional Official

**From** [Daily Environment Report™](#)

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*By Tiffany Stecker*

The EPA will soon grant an emergency petition to launch a federal response addressing widespread lead contamination in East Chicago, Ind., the Midwest's top regional official for the agency said March 30.

"I think there's going to be good news on that front," Robert Kaplan, acting Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 administrator, told Bloomberg BNA at the sidelines of a panel at the American Bar Association's Section of Environment, Energy and Resources spring conference in Los Angeles, adding that the agency is "carefully considering" the petition.

An alliance of environmental nonprofits led by the Natural Resources Defense Council filed the [petition](#) March 2 in response to a Reuters investigation finding widespread lead contamination in the city's drinking water. More than 40 percent of homes surrounding East Chicago's Superfund site had elevated levels of lead in their drinking water, according to an EPA pilot study last fall.

The petition asks the EPA to provide, or order the city and/or state to provide, residents with water filters or bottled water until the city's drinking water is safe to drink. It also requests an expansion of blood testing for lead for children under the age of seven.

Kaplan also called on his agency to quickly implement revisions to the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule, which dictates how water utilities must test for lead and notify communities with contaminated water.

Public health advocates have criticized the rule, saying it allows utilities to circumvent testing requirements, as was done in Flint, Mich., in 2015. The rule gives residents a false sense of security, Kaplan said on the panel. The EPA is planning to rewrite the rule this year.

To contact the reporter on this story: Tiffany Stecker in Washington, D.C., at [tstecker@bna.com](mailto:tstecker@bna.com)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Larry Pearl at [lpearl@bna.com](mailto:lpearl@bna.com)

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